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NEWS RELEASE

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EOIR Swears In Six Immigration Judges *New Judges to Serve in Three Immigration Courts Nationwide*

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – Assistant Chief Immigration Judge Jeffrey L. Romig swore in six immigration judges Dec. 11, 2009, during an investiture ceremony in San Diego, according to the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

The Attorney General appointed the judges after they completed a rigorous application, evaluation, and interview process. They join the ranks of more than 230 immigration judges located in more than 50 immigration courts nationwide.

Immigration judges conduct administrative courtroom proceedings. They determine whether foreign-born individuals, who the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) charges with immigration law violations, should be ordered removed from the United States or are eligible for relief from removal and permitted to remain in this country. Immigration judges decide cases based on U.S. immigration law and on a case-by-case basis. Their decisions are final unless appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals. In fiscal year 2008, immigration judges completed more than 350,000 proceedings.

The new immigration judges will preside in the immigration courts indicated below. Biographical information for the new immigration judges follows.

Charlotte Immigration Court
Barry J. Pettinato

Lancaster Immigration Court
David H. Burke

Los Angeles Immigration Court
Joyce A. Bakke Varzandeh
Monica M. Little
Tara Naselow-Nahas
Kevin W. Riley

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Charlotte Immigration Court

Barry J. Pettinato, Immigration Judge

Judge Pettinato was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. He received a bachelor of science degree in 1978 from Fitchburg State College and a juris doctorate in 1991 from Suffolk University Law School. From 2001 to November 2009, Judge Pettinato served in the Office of Immigration Litigation at the Department of Justice as a trial attorney, senior litigation counsel and assistant director. From 1991 to 2001, he worked as an assistant district counsel and trial attorney for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in San Francisco. Judge Pettinato is a member of the Bar of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Lancaster Immigration Court

David H. Burke, Immigration Judge

Judge Burke was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1985 from California State University, Fullerton, a master of arts degree in 1991 from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a juris doctorate in 1995 from the University of Colorado Law School. From 2008 to November 2009, Judge Burke served as an associate general counsel, Office of the Chief Counsel, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, DHS, in Dallas, Texas. From 2002 to 2008, Judge Burke worked as an assistant chief counsel, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), DHS, where he served as a special assistant U.S. attorney, in El Paso, Texas. From 1996 to 2002, he served as an assistant district counsel with the former INS in Los Angeles. Judge Burke is a member of the Colorado State Bar.

Los Angeles Immigration Court

Joyce A. Bakke Varzandeh, Immigration Judge

Judge Bakke Varzandeh was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1995 from Louisiana State University and a juris doctorate in 1998 from Southern University Law Center. For ICE, DHS, in Los Angeles, Judge Bakke Varzandeh held several positions: from 2008 to November 2009, Judge Bakke Varzandeh served as a deputy chief counsel; from 2007 to 2008, she served as a senior attorney; and from 2003 to 2007, she worked as an assistant chief counsel. From 1998 to 2003, Judge Bakke Varzandeh served as an assistant district counsel for the former INS in Los Angeles. From 1997 to 1998, she served as a law clerk for the U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Louisiana. From 1996 to 1997, Judge Bakke Varzandeh worked as a law clerk in the Office of the Attorney General, Louisiana Department of Justice, in Baton Rouge, La. Judge Bakke Varzandeh is a member of the Louisiana State Bar.

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Monica M. Little, Immigration Judge

Judge Little was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1972 and a master of public administration degree in 1974, both from the University of Washington, and a juris doctorate in 1980 from Lewis & Clark Law School. From 2003 to November 2009, Judge Little served with ICE, DHS, in Los Angeles in various capacities, most recently as deputy chief counsel. From 1995 to 2003, she served with the former INS in Los Angeles as an assistant chief counsel. From 1991 to 1995, she worked as an assistant regional counsel and assistant district counsel with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Seattle and Los Angeles. From 1990 to 1991, Judge Little was an assistant professor at West Virginia University. From 1988 to 1990, she was a staff attorney with the Metropolitan Service District in Portland, Ore. From 1988 to 1990, Judge Little served as an elected member of the Portland Community College Board of Directors in Portland. From 1987 to 1988, she was a hearings officer for the Oregon Public Utilities Commission in Salem, Ore. In 1987, she worked as a staff assistant to Portland's City Commissioner. From 1984 to 1987, Judge Little worked as an assistant district counsel, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland. From 1981 to 1983, she worked as a staff attorney and judicial law clerk for Multnomah County Circuit Court, Portland. From 1978 to 1981, Judge Little worked as a legal intern and law clerk for several private firms, the Federal Defender's Office, and HUD in Portland and Seattle. From 1976 to 1977, she was an assistant management analyst and budget analyst for several governmental agencies in Washington state and Oregon. Judge Little is a member of the Oregon State Bar.

Tara Naselow-Nahas, Immigration Judge

Judge Naselow-Nahas was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. She received a bachelor of arts degree in 1989 from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a juris doctorate in 1992 from Whittier School of Law. From 2004 to November 2009, Judge Naselow-Nahas served as deputy chief counsel, ICE, DHS, in Los Angeles. From 2003 to 2004, she served as assistant chief counsel for ICE, and from 1995 to 2003, she served as an assistant chief counsel for the former INS. From 1992 to 1995, Judge Naselow-Nahas worked as a judicial law clerk at the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. From 1991 to 1992, she served as a law clerk, summer associate, and judicial extern. Judge Naselow-Nahas is a member of the State Bar of California.

Kevin W. Riley, Immigration Judge

Judge Riley was appointed as an immigration judge in November 2009. He received a bachelor of arts degree in 1992 from the University of Oregon, a juris doctorate in 1995 from UCLA School of Law and a masters of business administration degree in 2005 from California State University. From 2004 to November 2009, Judge Riley served as deputy chief counsel, ICE, DHS, in Los Angeles. From 2003 to 2004, he served as an assistant chief counsel for ICE in Los Angeles. From 1995 to 2003, he served as an assistant district counsel for the former INS

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EOIR Swears In Six Immigration Judges

Page 4

in Los Angeles. From May to August 1994, he worked as a law clerk for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Las Vegas, Nev. Judge Riley is a member of the State Bar of California.

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The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an agency within the Department of Justice. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, immigration judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals interpret and adjudicate immigration cases according to United States immigration laws. EOIR's immigration judges conduct administrative court proceedings in immigration courts located throughout the nation. They determine whether foreign-born individuals, who the Department of Homeland Security charges with immigration law violations, should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. The Board of Immigration Appeals primarily reviews appeals of decisions by immigration judges. EOIR's Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to ensuring fairness in all of the cases it adjudicates.